

Culture Shock

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What is culture shock?

- “Culture shock is about being out of place in a certain place and time.”
 - (Irwin, 2007)
- Comes from the anxiety that results from losing our familiar signs and symbols of social interaction
- Almost everyone who lives in another culture experiences culture shock and almost everyone survives it.

What is culture shock?

- The feelings people have when they move to an unfamiliar culture.
 - Immigrant children may become withdrawn and passive or they may be aggressive.
 - The more different the new culture is from their own, the greater the shock.

Have you had any of these feelings?

- People seem to behave differently here than in your home.
- Americans don't seem to share the same values as you.
- You feel disoriented, anxious, depressed, or hostile.
- You are not satisfied with American culture.
- Social skills that work in your country don't work here.
- You think that these feelings will never end.

Four Stages of Culture Shock

- **1. Euphoric or Honeymoon Stage**
- **2. Culture Shock Stage.**
- **3. Integration Stage.**
- **4. Acceptance Stage.**

Euphoric or Honeymoon Stage

- New culture is exciting and fascinating
- Usually lasts a few days to a month
- The tourist experience

Culture Shock Stage

- Often described as the hostility/rejection stage
 - Ss become disoriented and have trouble adjusting
 - They blame the new culture for confusing them
 - They may become frustrated, angry, or aggressive toward the new culture
 - They may criticize or stereotype the new culture
 - They look for people from their own culture
 - Crisis point: Decide to stay or leave

Integration Stage

■ Adjustment

- Ss begin to function well in the new culture
- They see good and bad aspects of new culture
 - Still may think their own culture is better
- They don't criticize as much
- May make jokes about the culture and their difficulties

Acceptance Stage

■ Integration

- Ss accept and even enjoy the new culture as another way of living
- Still occasional difficulties, but less anxious feelings
- Generally, Ss feel comfortable in the new culture
- May reach biculturality

Practical Strategies

- Enjoy and learn about the new culture.
- Avoid isolation.
- Maintain relationships both in and out of the culture.
- Use resources and ask for help.
- Don't expect to be perfect.
- Keep an open mind as you "study" the culture.
- Adjust to the new culture without giving up your own.
- Look forward, not backward.
- Keep a journal, notebook, or blog.